/8 cont./

579 nothing will give him away or betray him, neither his dagger, always kept in a sheath, nor the glitter of his rifle, wrapped in a cover, nor the soft, inaudible steps of his feet outfitted in bast shoes, nor his horse, well-trained for night-riding, nor, finally, his tongue, the hissing sounds of which resemble the rustling of leaves... With bloodshot eyes, his dagger in one hand and his pistol in the other, the mountaineer throws himself into the battle with a frightful whoop, and at this moment he forgets everything but victory... Such are the Abkhaz and their neighbors.

Even now the Abkhaz looks upon thieving as an act of boldness, of heroism, /9/ and almost as much of a necessity as food and drink. All the Abkhaz, from the small to the great, suffer equally from this ailment -- men, women, and children, and the Abkhazian upper class have even made it their regular occupation. Times and circumstances change, generation after
● [198] generation slowly but steadily introduces new cultural principles into Abkhaz life -- and robbery alone remains the favorite occupation, as though hallowed by the authority of a hoary antiquity...

867 As a matter of fact, what is surprising about it? While still a child, the Abkhaz is subjected to the irresistible influence of the circumstances surrounding him and of all possible elemental forces. And as he grows up, he acts according to these external elemental influences or internal moral influences. Now, to what forces is the Abkhaz exposed in his youth, and what moral principles does he derive from the phenomena and facts of nature and the milieu around him?... There he is, as a child, holding in his hand a knife with a handle bigger than he is, pasturing buffalo or goats in the forest or in the mountains, and he observes what goes on before his eyes: here a fox, lying in wait for a careless wild chicken, catches its prey and carries it into the depths of the forest to finish it off; there a half-starved wolf snatches a lamb from the herd, under the eyes of the unwary shepherd -- a boy like himself; and there, farther away, a bird of prey, waiting until the right moment, shoots down like an arrow upon one of the weaker forest-dwellers and, sinking its claws into its body, flies up with its prey and disappears into

/15 cont./

462 [281] [513] [912] morocco-leather (tsush) so popular with foreigners; this tsush serves in Abkhazia for bedding in summer. The men make beautiful spoons out of wood and animal horns. Many hunters kill seven or eight bears a year, but do not sell the skins. In 437 general buying and selling in Abkhazia are done by barter; money is not used in these cases.

433 [231] [541] The main sources of food of the Abkhaz are agriculture, cattle-breeding, and to a certain extent, apiculture. In the foothills the Abkhaz often possess as many as 200 and more beehives. Nowadays they sow maize and occasionally wheat. A few years ago, gomi (ghomi) /millet/ was considered the main and most widespread cereal, but now maize has completely supplanted it. Besides this, tobacco, cotton, flax, hemp, and vegetables are sown, but in limited quantity and only for home use.

233 [556] Cattle constitute the main wealth of the Abkhaz; in their opinion this is the main support of the life of man; it is what feeds him, makes him grow, and preserves him. The Abkhaz cannot conceive of life without cattle; one can somehow manage to get along without bread, but not without cattle. This conception is especially true of the herdsmen, of whom it [260] may be said /16/ that they live almost exclusively on meat and milk. To feed his herd, not infrequently consisting of no more than two or three head of cattle, the Abkhaz, when grass gave out in one place, would move to another place where grass was easier to find, taking along his phatskha (hut of wattles). So it [178] was until the last war; after that the main attention of the [243] Abkhaz was concentrated on the sowing of maize, the export of which is growing day by day.

342 The structure of the Abkhaz house, the phatskha, is simple. In appearance it is round or rectangular. The walls of the phatskha slope upwards and are woven together with thin nut-twigs; on top of these rests a cone-shaped roof; the top of the cone is tied together with willow-branches or twigs; the branches are supported by little poles (dardzagini /see foreign text/). This [824] simple structure is covered with ferns, reeds, or spear-grass (Agrostis vulgaris).

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

small salt *akwakwdr*. They then go out into the garden and eat their scones in silence in the dark, at the same time entreating *Làmilakì* to bestow upon them a happy married life. Whoever finds the "stake of happiness" in his or her scone must celebrate this stroke of luck by giving a party for all the participants. On the following day the *Làmilakì* party is given at the house of the lucky one. After consuming the little *akwakwdr* all go back into the house and sit down to a supper which is also an occasion for gaiety. In order to maintain the feeling of thirst at its strongest, no one is allowed to drink anything. The Abkhasians believe that the thirsty person will be given a drink by the one with whom he or she is fated to share conjugal life. In such manner do the young people of Abkhasia tell their fortunes.[1]

II. Àmshap'

In this chapter I have collected together all those rites grouped around the festival of Easter, called in Abkhasian *Àmshap'*.[2] The *Àmshap'* celebrations began[3] two weeks before Easter Sunday, and continued for exactly three weeks, during which time custom forbade working in the field, except in the cotton field and the kitchen garden. On Sunday, two weeks before Easter Day, the Abkhasians decorated their houses with the first spring flowers, and this Sunday is called *aioba*, which is derived, probably, from the Megrelian *aia*, violet. Until *aioba*, playing football or other games was forbidden. After that day, however, seasonal games were in full swing. Dressed in their finest attire, the whole population gave themselves up to public sports. Among the most popular pastimes were football, wrestling, stone throwing, trick-riding, dancing, singing, and *akyabir* (in Geo. *riktap'ela*, "game of skittles," according to Tchubinashvili's or Tchubinov's Dictionary).

The following Sunday—Palm Sunday—the Abkhasians call *baioba* (a "Megrelianization"). The name is derived from *a-baia*, a yellow flower which grows profusely in the fields of Abkhasia in the early spring.[4] On this day also the Abkhasians decorated their houses with flowers, particularly with *abala*.

[1] *Anasp'a dzw* has its double in Guria and Imeret'i *bedis-kveri*, cracknel of fate, which is known also to the Tiflis Armenians. I think the Puhav *dzadzola* arose on this ground.

[2] It is, in my opinion, a compound word, consisting of *amsh*, day, and *ap'* (*yap'u*), accepted, appointed, fixed; *Àmshap'* thus denotes "pre-ordained day" (Geo. *mighebuli dghe*).

[3] These celebrations are no longer observed; they are traditional, and I am describing them from memory, or from the words of the Commission.

[4] According to Tchubinashvili (Tchubinov), and to R. Erist'avi (Eristov), *baia* is crows-foot, *ranunculus*. Erist'avi, considering the word to be Megrelo-Imero-Gurian, gives as its K'art'(l)ian equivalent *tskhviris-tsiskhela*. The word *a-bala*, in Abkhasian *a-mërtch*, is, according to the botanists of the Sukhum Botanical Gardens, the equivalent of the Russian *lyutik ledki*.

3: Janashia I-5 (ca. 1900) 1937 RI3 Abkhas RI3
Adzvibzha

796 [969] On this day also they "lay the table", that is, prepare a dinner, for the souls of the deceased, unless the day happens to be one of abstinence, i.e. Wednesday or Friday. In the latter event the feast takes place on the following day.

(e) *Àdsyla-nə̀ĥwa*

On the same day of the Assumption is observed *Àdsyla-nə̀ĥwa* (cf. II (10)). The children are taken to a meadow where they are told to place their right legs against a tree. Each holding an *akwakwdr* in the right hand, they remain meekly in this position until the eldest in the family has addressed the prayer to "the spirit of the tree", entreating "the great part of the deity of the tree" to safeguard them from giddiness, from falling off the tree, and from injuries. The children must eat their *akwakwdr* without removing their legs from the tree.

(f) *Anàna-gùnda* (the goddess of bees)

796 831 This is both a spring and a summer feast.

In the spring, when the bees begin to hive, the eldest ("pure") woman of the family takes some hirse (Geo. *ṗ'etvi*) and an egg, and [794] enters the apiary, where she passes the offerings three times over the hives, and prays to the goddess of the bees, *Anàna-gùnda*: "Submitting these as a pledge that the established offering will be made at the proper time, I humbly entreat thee, *Anàna-gùnda*, to be the guardian of our bees; safeguard them from all illnesses, multiply them, and grant them a good crop!" Hirse and the egg are hung over the apiary.

In the summer, between the 15th July and the end of August, before the gathering of the first honeycombs, more during August, on a Thursday or Saturday, the promised offering to the goddess [783] *Anàna-gùnda* is made. A large corncake (*a-mgal*), stuffed with cheese, is baked, and placed on one of the hives; also an egg. The family kneel in front of the offering, and the "pure" woman again invokes the mercy of *Anàna-gùnda* upon the honey bees, and says an improvised prayer. The family repeat a long drawn out *dämen*.

After the ceremony, she divides the corncakes crosswise, into four parts, with two strokes of the knife; and cuts these into smaller pieces. The family sit down there and then and dine. They do not [621] forget the neighbours, sending a small piece each. The remains are placed in a basket and hung up in the apiary. Everybody passing by is obliged to enter the apiary and bless the honey bees and, scattering about a little hirse, eat a piece of corncake.

[178] In ancient times when the Abkhasians irreproachably observed all the rites, the gods were more merciful to them. Thus, the goddess